

Serial No. 10/797,645

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A turnbuckle assembly comprising:

a first one-piece sleeve having first and second axial ends, said first axial end of said first sleeve having an internally threaded portion which threadably engages a first threaded part, said first axial end of said first sleeve including an integrally formed clamp which clamps said first axial end to the first threaded part, said first sleeve being hollow throughout the extent of the first sleeve;

a second one-piece sleeve having first and second axial ends, said first axial end of said second sleeve having an internally threaded portion which threadably engages a second threaded part, said first axial end of said second sleeve including an integrally formed clamp which clamps said first axial end to the second threaded part, said second sleeve being hollow throughout the extent of the second sleeve; and

a connector member interconnecting said first and second sleeves, said connector member having a first axial end non-rotatably connected to said second axial end of said first sleeve, said connector member having a second axial end non-rotatably connected to said second axial end of said second sleeve;

said second axial end of said first sleeve having a first flat outer surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said first sleeve, said connecting member having a first flat inner surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said first sleeve and engageable with said first outer surface of said second axial end of said first sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said first sleeve, said first sleeve including an intermediate portion located between said first axial end of said first sleeve and said second axial end of said first sleeve, said intermediate portion of said first

sleeve longitudinally tapering inwardly at all sides from said first axial end of said first sleeve to said second axial end of said first sleeve to define a frusto-conical shape; and

said second axial end of said second sleeve having a first flat outer surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said second sleeve, said connecting member having a second flat inner surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said second sleeve and engageable with said first outer surface of said second axial end of said second sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said second sleeve, said second sleeve including an intermediate portion located between said first axial end of said second sleeve and said second axial end of said second sleeve, said intermediate portion of said second sleeve longitudinally tapering inwardly at all sides from said first axial end of said second sleeve to said second axial end of said second sleeve to define a frusto-conical shape.

Claim 2 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first axial end of said first sleeve includes first and second clamping portions movable toward each other to clamp said first sleeve to the first threaded part, said first axial end of said second sleeve including first and second clamping portions movable toward each other to clamp said second sleeve to the second threaded part.

Claim 3 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 2 wherein each of said first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve includes a radially extending portion having a plurality of openings through which bolts extend to move the first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve toward each other, each of said first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve including a radially extending portion having a plurality of openings through which bolts extend to move said first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve toward each other.

Claim 4 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 2 wherein said first clamping portion of said first sleeve includes a portion extending toward said second clamping portion of said first sleeve, said first clamping portion of said second sleeve including a portion extending toward said second clamping portion of said second sleeve.

Claim 5 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein said portion of said first clamping portion of said first sleeve has a surface extending parallel to said axis of said first sleeve, said portion of said first clamping portion of said second sleeve having a surface extending parallel to said axis of said second sleeve.

Claim 6 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 2 wherein said first sleeve has a longitudinally extending seam, said first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve extending on opposite sides of said seam in said first sleeve, said second sleeve having a longitudinally extending seam, said first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve extending on opposite sides of said seam in said second sleeve.

Claim 7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 7 wherein said second end of said first sleeve has a second outer surface extending parallel to said axis and said first outer surface of said first sleeve, said connecting member having a third inner surface engageable with said second outer surface of said second end of said first sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said first sleeve, said second end of said second sleeve having a second outer surface extending parallel to said first outer surface and said axis of said second sleeve, said connecting member having a fourth inner surface engageable with said second outer surface of said second end of said second sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said second sleeve.

Claim 9 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first end of said first sleeve has a first outer diameter, said second end of said first sleeve having a second outer diameter smaller than the first outer diameter, said first end of said second sleeve having a first outer diameter, said second end of said second sleeve having a second outer diameter smaller than the first outer diameter of said second sleeve.

Claim 10 (Original) A turnbuckle assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said connecting member is crimped to said second end of said first sleeve, said connecting member being crimped to said second end of said second sleeve.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod for an automotive vehicle, said tie rod comprising:

a first tie rod member including a first end portion ~~having~~ having a left-hand, external ~~threads~~ thread and a second end portion having a socket ~~attachment means~~;

a second tie rod member including a first end portion ~~having~~ having a right-hand, external ~~threads~~ thread and a second end portion having a socket ~~attachment means~~;

a first sleeve having first and second axial ends, said first axial end of said first sleeve having an internally threaded portion which threadably engages said first end portion of said first tie rod member, said first axial end of said first sleeve including an integrally formed clamp which clamps said first axial end to said first end portion of said first tie rod member, said first sleeve being hollow throughout the extent of the first sleeve;

a second sleeve having first and second axial ends, said first axial end of said second sleeve having an internally threaded portion which threadably engages said first end portion of said second tie rod member, said first axial end of said second sleeve including an integrally formed clamp which clamps said first axial end to said first end portion of said second tie rod member, said second sleeve being hollow throughout the extent of the second sleeve; and

a connector member interconnecting said first and second sleeves, said connector member having a first axial end non-rotatably connected to said second axial end of said first sleeve, said connector member having a second axial end non-rotatably connected to said second axial end of said second sleeve;

said second axial end of said first sleeve having a first flat outer surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said first sleeve, said connecting member having a first flat inner surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said first sleeve and engageable with said first outer surface of said second axial end of said first sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said first sleeve, said first sleeve including an intermediate portion located between said first axial end of said first sleeve and said second axial end of said first sleeve, said intermediate portion of said first sleeve longitudinally tapering inwardly at all sides from said first axial end of said first sleeve to said second axial end of said first sleeve to define a frusto-conical shape; and

said second axial end of said second sleeve having a first flat outer surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said second sleeve, said connecting member having a second flat inner surface extending parallel and transverse to the axis of said second sleeve and engageable with said first outer surface of said second axial end of said second sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said second sleeve, said second sleeve including an intermediate portion located between said first axial end of said second sleeve and said second axial end of said second sleeve, said intermediate portion of said second sleeve longitudinally tapering inwardly at all sides from said first axial end of said second sleeve to said second axial end of said second sleeve to define a frusto-conical shape.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 11 wherein said first axial end of said first sleeve includes first and second clamping portions movable toward each other to clamp said first sleeve to said first end portion of said first tie rod member, said first axial end of said second sleeve including first and second clamping

portions movable toward each other to clamp said second sleeve to said first end portion of said second tie rod member.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 12 wherein each of said first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve includes a radially extending portion having a plurality of openings through which bolts extend to move the first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve toward each other, each of said first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve including a radially extending portion having a plurality of openings through which bolts extend to move the first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve toward each other.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 12 wherein said first clamping portion of said first sleeve includes a portion extending toward said second clamping portion of said first sleeve, said first clamping portion of said second sleeve including a portion extending toward said second clamping portion of said second sleeve.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) ~~A turnbuckle assembly~~ tie rod as set forth in claim 14 wherein said portion of said first clamping portion of said first sleeve has a surface extending parallel to said axis of said first sleeve, said portion of said first clamping portion of said second sleeve having a surface extending parallel to said axis of said second sleeve.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 12 wherein said first sleeve has a longitudinally extending seam, said first and second clamping portions of said first sleeve extending on opposite sides of said seam in said first sleeve, said second sleeve having a longitudinally extending seam, said first and second clamping portions of said second sleeve extending on opposite sides of said seam in said second sleeve.

Claim 17 (Canceled)

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) A ~~turnbuckle assembly~~ tie rod as set forth in claim 17 wherein said second end of said first sleeve has a second outer surface extending parallel to said axis and said first outer surface of said first sleeve, said connecting member having a third inner surface engageable with said second outer surface of said second end of said first sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said first sleeve, said second end of said second sleeve having a second outer surface extending parallel to said first outer surface and said axis of said second sleeve, said connecting member having a fourth inner surface engageable with said second outer surface of said second end of said second sleeve to prevent relative rotation between said connecting member and said second sleeve.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 11 wherein said first end of said first sleeve has a first outer diameter, said second end of said first sleeve having a second outer diameter smaller than the first outer diameter of said first sleeve, said first end of said second sleeve having a first outer diameter, said second end of said second sleeve having a second outer diameter smaller than the first outer diameter of said second sleeve.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended) ~~An adjustable tie~~ A tie rod as set forth in claim 11 wherein said connecting member is crimped to said second ends of said first and second sleeves.

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